



Snohomish County
Planning and Development
Services

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ONLINE INFORMATION

www.snohomishcountywa.gov/1190



This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Assistance Bulletin

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Docketing Process

Revised March 2015

WWW.SNOCO.ORG

Keyword: Assistance Bulletins

Q: What is the docketing process?

A: The docketing process is a procedure for receiving and evaluating citizen-initiated proposals to amend the county's comprehensive plan and/or development regulations.

Q: What is the purpose of the docketing process?

A: The State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties and cities planning under GMA to maintain such a procedure for citizens interested in suggesting changes to their GMA-based comprehensive plans. The GMA limits counties and cities to amend their comprehensive plans to once per year with a few exceptions.

Q: What do I need to do to submit a proposal for an amendment to the comprehensive plan and/or development regulations?

A: Complete an application and submit it to the Planning and Technology Division of the Department of Planning and Development Services (PDS) by the deadline of the last business day in October.

Docket applications are available online or at the PDS Customer Permitting Center at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., 2nd floor of the Robert J. Drewel Building. Check the docket website at www.snohomishcountywa.gov and search "docket application."

Q: What is the deadline for applications for the docket?

A: The department will accept docket proposals at any time. However, proposals received after the last business day of October of each year will not be processed until after the following year's docket deadline.

Q: How do I begin the process?

A: A pre-application meeting is recommended prior to every docket application submittal. To schedule a pre-application meeting, please call the Planning and Technology Division, (425) 388-3311 ext. 2207. The pre-application meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss your proposal and for staff to explain the submittal process and required information.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change.
For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

Q: What information should I be prepared to provide as a part of my application?**A:** At the time of your application submittal, you will need to provide the following:

1. A completed and signed application which includes:
 - a. A description of the proposed amendment including proposed map or text changes.
 - b. The location of the property that is the subject of amendment on an assessor map dated and signed by the applicant, if the proposal is for a future land use map amendment.
 - c. A legal description and a notarized signature of one or more owners, if a rezone is requested by owners concurrent with a requested future land use map amendment.
 - d. An explanation of why the amendment is being proposed.
 - e. An explanation of how the proposed amendment is consistent with the GMA, the countywide planning policies, and the goals, objectives, and policies of the county GMA comprehensive plan.
 - f. If applicable, an explanation of why existing comprehensive plan language should be added, modified, or deleted.
 - g. If a proposal includes an expansion of an urban growth area that would increase residential or employment land capacity and the most recent buildable lands report indicates that no additional residential or employment land capacity is needed in that UGA, the proposal must also include a proposed area for removal of land from the UGA so that the residential or employment land capacity is not increased. The properties proposed for removal from the UGA must be contiguous with the UGA boundary and be rural in character with rural densities.
2. The initial docket fee.
3. A completed and signed environmental checklist.
4. A signed acknowledgement of the cost of environmental review and studies associated with the processing of the application.
5. A signed acknowledgement that the fees required for processing a docket proposal are non-refundable and that the fee payments do not guarantee county approval.
6. A signed acknowledgement that the applicant is responsible for costs associated with printing, publishing, and mailing of notice of any public hearing and SEPA notification required for the applicant's docket proposal.

Q: What happens to my proposal after I have submitted it?**A:** Your docket application will be evaluated by PDS based on the following Initial Review criteria:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the countywide planning policies, the multicounty planning policies, the GMA, and other applicable state and federal laws.
2. Any proposed change in the designation of agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral lands is consistent with the designation criteria of the GMA and the comprehensive plan.
3. If the proposed amendment has been reviewed by the planning commission or county council as part of a previous proposal, circumstances related to the current proposal have significantly changed and support a plan or regulation change at this time.
4. If the next docket cycle to be set is limited to minor amendments by SCC 30.74.015(2)(a), the proposal satisfies all of the following conditions:
 - a. The time required to analyze environmental impacts of the proposed amendment is available within the time frame for processing minor amendments.
 - b. The time required for additional analysis to determine the need for additional capital improvements and revenues to maintain level of service, when applicable to the proposal, is available within the time frame for processing minor amendments.
 - c. The time required for processing any required additional amendments not anticipated by the proponent

- d. The proposed amendment does not alter the urban growth area boundary.
- e. The proposed amendment does not make or require substantial changes to comprehensive plan policy language.
- f. The proposed amendment does not change land capacity to an extent that would require compensating changes in other areas in order to maintain consistency with policies and growth allocations established at the county and regional level.

Final Docket Review:

1. Applicants whose docket proposals are placed on the final docket are required to pay a final docket review fee.
2. PDS will conduct any review required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The applicant is responsible for paying the cost of environmental review and studies under SEPA if their proposal will have probable significant adverse environmental impacts not previously analyzed.
3. PDS is required to prepare a report including a recommendation on each final docket proposal and forward the report to the Planning Commission. PDS will recommend approval if all of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The proposed amendment and any related proposals on the current final docket maintain consistency with other plan elements or development regulations.
 - b. All applicable elements of the comprehensive plan, including but not limited to the capital plan and the transportation element, support the proposed amendment.
 - c. The proposed amendment more closely meets the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan than the relevant existing plan or code provision.
 - d. The proposed amendment is consistent with the countywide planning policies.
 - e. The proposed amendment complies with the GMA.
 - f. New information is available that was not considered at the time the relevant comprehensive plan or development regulation was adopted that changes underlying assumptions and supports the proposed amendment.
4. For final dockets that are limited to minor proposals, PDS and the Planning Commission shall complete their processing of the final docket and transmit final recommendations to the County Council within 12 months of the date the Council sets the final docket unless additional processing time is needed.
5. For final dockets that include both major and minor proposals, PDS and the Planning Commission shall complete their processing of the final docket and transmit final recommendations to the County Council within 24 months of the date the Council sets the final docket unless additional processing time is needed.
6. If the County Council does not take action on a final docket proposal within one year of the Planning Commission's public hearing on the proposal, the proposal shall be removed from the final docket and not processed further.
7. The docket applicant is responsible for the cost of printing, publishing, and mailing of any SEPA notification and any required public hearing on the proposal.
8. When considering a final docket proposal, the County Council is not required to take final action on a proposal. The Council may choose instead to:
 - a. Remove the proposal by motion from the final docket.
 - b. Not introduce an ordinance to approve the proposal.
 - c. Delay consideration of the proposal to a future docket.
 - d. Otherwise, not act on the proposal.